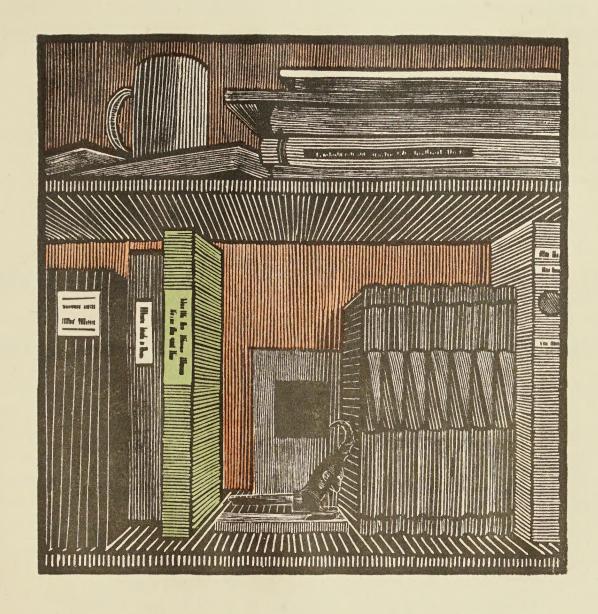
THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY NEWS-LETTER

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PETER RUTLEDGE KOCH: Inkslingers: Printing in San Francisco Post-Grabhorn, 1975-1985

WIM DE WIT: A Review of Architects and Artists: The Work of Ernest and Esther Born

DAVID BROCK: A Review of Suave Mechanicals: Essays on the History of Bookbinding

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News from the Library & the Book Club

New Members

The BOOK CLUB of CALIFORNIA is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1912. It supports the art of fine printing related to the history and literature of California and the West through research, publishing, public programs, and exhibitions. Membership in the Club is open to all. Annual renewals are due by January I of every year. Membership dues are: Regular, \$95; Sustaining, \$150; Patron, \$250; Sponsor, \$500; Benefactor, \$1,000, and Student, \$25. All members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and, except Student members, the annual keepsake. All members have the privilege — but not the obligation — of buying Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member until remaining quantities are released for purchase of additional copies. All members may purchase extra copies of keepsakes or *QN-L* s, when available. Portions of membership dues — in the amount of \$36 for Regular members, \$91 for Sustaining members, \$191 for Patrons, \$441 for Sponsors, and \$941 for Benefactors — are deductible in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code, as are donations, whether monetary or in the form of books. The Book Club of California's tax-exempt number is 42-2954746.

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INKSLINGERS

Printing in San Francisco Post Grabhorn, 1975 to 1985

(A lecture by Peter Koch delivered at Columbia University on October 9, 1989)

EDITOR'S NOTE: I first delivered the following somewhat optimistic illustrated lecture at Columbia University, upon the invitation of Terry Belanger, in October of 1989. (I delivered it again the following January at the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, immediately following the San Francisco Loma Prieta earthquake — which is another story in itself.) Since then, much has changed. As one would expect, many of the presses mentioned in this lecture have ceased operations, a number more have started up, and some of those have closed since. Of the thirty-two presses mentioned, only eight are still active in the Bay Area.

As if to compensate for this decline, there has been a burst of activity among visual artists with Vandercook printing presses in their studios, a vigorous and eclectic community of book artists. The San Francisco Center for the Book, founded by Mary Austin and Kathleen Burch in 1996, both reflects this movement and has sparked an enormous amount of its activity. Letterpress printing is popular among graphic designers and it is becoming almost impossible to find a suitable press, because much of the available stock manufactured between 1900 and 1970 is in the hands of commercial letterpress stationers.

Fine art teaching presses and artists'-bookmakers absorb the remainder.

If there is a conclusion to be drawn from looking back at a lecture delivered twenty-six years ago, I am tempted to put parentheses around the period from 1975 to 1989. These were the last days of a briefly flourishing, small independent and private press movement devoted to publishing contemporary literature printed from metal type. The period of the private press is not entirely over yet, but the number of presses remaining in the San Francisco Bay Area that still print literature while adhering to the high-craft principles of fine printing has declined. With some notable exceptions, the younger printers today are primarily visual artists. Their books tend to go off in previously uncharted directions, leaving what was once known as the typographic book in the dustbin. Exciting? Yes — but it leaves a small taste of disappointment in the mouths of those of us who have labored passionately and for so long in the vineyards of the text. To end on an upbeat note, I hope that any future revival of interest in the typographic book will benefit greatly from the natural exuberance of the present era of the artist's book.

The following has been edited slightly to update it for print.

PART I

Y SUBJECT MATTER IS A SURVEY, REALLY A SHORT collection of historical notes, about a selection of fifty or so printers and the thirty-two presses under whose imprint they have published. All the presses are in the greater Bay Area and all were active during the period from 1975 to 1985. There are obvious omissions for which I apologize in advance and plead guilty — you may correct, criticize, or cajole me later — but time disallows a fair hearing for all.

The Bay Area, for my purposes, extends north into Marin County and south to the seaside resort of Santa Cruz, east to the cities of Oakland and Berkeley, and west to the uninhabited Farralon Islands — the Fertile Crescent so to speak, at the center of which is the magnetic specter of San Francisco itself, a city of obvious beauty and a truly benign climate. The weather in the Bay Area has been praised by both physicians and printers — the former because the climate is conducive to educating young surgeons, since a cadaver there will last a good long time in a fresher state, and the latter because the even temperatures and the fog lend extraordinary qualities to printing papers — minimum shrinkage and a pleasant dampness that enhances ink receptivity.

The title includes the word *inkslingers* and denotes a certain romance and a maverick sensibility that certainly does infuse our culture way out here on the western edge. We are "beholdin" to no one, although if we were we would be beholdin to Grabhorn.

The Grabhorn brothers, along with Jane Grabhorn, were thought by critics to be the finest printers in the world during their day. They exerted enormous influence. The most prominent printers I shall mention tonight — Adrian Wilson, Jack Stauffacher, William Everson, Lewis and Dorothy Allen, and Andrew Hoyem — have all acknowledged their debt and paid homage to the temple Grabhorn, some more reluctantly than others.

JOHN WINDLE ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLER

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In 1987 the Book Club of California published the third volume of a series, California Printing: A Selected List of Books Signifying or Representative of a California Style of Printing, Part 3, 1925–1975. The last entry is William Everson's Granite and Cypress (1975), a landmark in the history of printing, and a book that Joseph Blumenthal called "a work of art." To my mind, two books — Granite and Cypress along with Jack Stauffacher's Phaedrus (also published in 1975) — simultaneously open and close an epoch in California printing. With Stauffacher's cool and spare, intellectual, classic approach to design on the one hand, and Everson's personal, warm, and experimental approach on the other, these books signal a new era by carrying to an extreme preceding tendencies in book design and philosophy. Stauffacher entirely ignores the more intuitive American environment and draws heavily upon more rational European influences for his inspiration, while Everson gathers his strength from California regional history and materials as well as strong currents in American typography and design, especially Frederic Goudy and the Grabhorn brothers.

In his book *Fine Printing: The San Francisco Tradition*, James D. Hart (who himself is a proprietor of a private press) discusses, among others, Everson, Stauffacher, and Wilson. Hart closes with a discussion of the "youngest of all the major post-Grabhorn generation of printers, Andrew Hoyem." Here then is my point of departure.

MY THESIS, IF SO EXACTING A TERM MAY BE APPLIED TO SO LOOSE a collection of opinion and a few facts, is that the period from 1975 to 1985 was an exceptionally fertile period for the book arts in the Bay Area. Seven colleges and universities offered classes in letterpress printing, bookbinding, and the history of the book. Well over fifty presses operated during the period, and the list of published works is truly prodigious. More than merely fertile, this time was rife with controversy and the spirit of experimentation and humor. Every conceivable canon of bookmaking was broken, ignored, and indeed trampled upon in the exuberant atmosphere of these years. Books were issued in cans and covered with shower caps. They were finally liberated from being just books and we welcomed the book-like object. In 1975, at one extreme was William Everson and the book as monument, a field for individual literary and printerly expression; at another was Jack Stauffacher and the book as text — rational, [exhibiting] pure typography and high-craft standards, and acting as vehicle for ideas as they are embodied in the author's language.

Adrian Wilson was more moderate than either Everson or Stauffacher. Adrian respected the text, but was not so rational, nor so cool. He loved to experiment but never pushed his design so far as to disturb the purity of the text or the slumber of the cannons. Playful and acrobatic, tasteful and ultimately influential, Adrian endowed his work with a *joie de vivre* unparalleled in recent design history.

Adrian, Jack, and Bill — the big three in a small pond. Each of these men influenced numerous students and apprentices both in their studios and in the classroom. All three taught at the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California, and Jack and Adrian both taught the history of book design at the Library School at Berkeley. Nearly all the printers I shall mention were either students, or students of students, of one of these men.

Before I proceed to the next generation of printers I must first mention Lewis and Dorothy Allen. The Allen Press is justly famous for its use of the hand press, achieving masterful results thereon. As their press was very private, the Allens are not influential among the younger printers, except, by reputation, as models of purity of handcraftsmanship.

Andrew Hoyem and his Arion Press is another major force in the Bay Area book world, known for his phenomenal output, his commercial savvy, and his radical ideas (Andrew was the first to issue a book in a film can). Because he does not teach, he is not a very influential printer for the younger generation unless as a foil or perhaps a scapegoat, as everyone is tempted to pull his beard. One prominent San Francisco artist, when presented with a copy of the Arion Press's *Flatland*, immediately put it in her refrigerator, remarking on its resemblance to a can of sardines. Hoyem's *Moby Dick* illustrated by Barry Moser (1979) was an enormous book and first to break the thousand dollar barrier. His latest, *Ulysses*, illustrated by Robert Motherwell, is simply gigantic — twice as thick as the *Oxford Universal Dictionary* and nearly twice the two-volume Random House *Remembrance of Things Past*, while the \$7,500 price tag is for the cheaper edition. Andrew, the most ambitious of the Bay Area printers, acquired in 1988 the legendary Mackenzie-Harris type foundry.

AT THIS POINT THERE EMERGES A CLEARLY DIFFERENT GENERATION of printer/publishers — a generation defined not by age so much as by philosophy and influences.

Clifford Burke's Cranium Press is the press most likely to fall through the cracks, as his work aligns best with the pre-1975 era, but was not included in either the Book Club survey or James Hart's essay. Clifford was very influential, more for his generous spirit and evangelistic teaching than for any

notable book monument. He studied under Adrian Wilson and his design shows the influence of Stanley Morison through Adrian Wilson. Cranium Press was devoted to Clifford's main passion — poetry — and he printed over a hundred titles as well as several hundred broadsides, posters, and ephemeral items. Clifford moved to San Francisco and opened his press in 1966. His earliest work was offset printing. In 1967 he studied with Peter Bailey, a graphic designer in the Zen Buddhist community; from 1968 to 1970 he worked part time with Adrian Wilson; and from 1970 to 1976 he operated his press full time. Under his own imprint, Clifford published Lew Welch's Redwood Haiku and Other Poems and Michael McClure's The Mammals in 1972. His most notable work, The Maya Quartos, was published over a period of several years and included texts by Jack Hirshman, Cid Corman, Philip Whalen, Theodore Enslin, Robert Duncan, and Lew Welch, among others. Clifford worked with Gary Snyder and printed The Fudo Trilogy for Shaman Drum publishers in 1973. Other publishers he designed and printed for include City Lights Books, Turtle Island, the Book Club of California, Wingbow, Oyez, etc. Clifford taught classes at Mills College, Lone Mountain College, California College of Arts and Crafts (now the California College of Art), the Urban School, and the University of California Extension at Berkeley. A highly opinionated man, he published Printing It, a do-it-yourself manual for small press publishers (Ballantine Books, 1972) and Printing Poetry (Scarab Press, 1980), a book-length manifesto. For Clifford, printing was integral to his writing of poetry and his spiritual aspirations, influenced by the Zen Buddhist philosophy as practiced in San Francisco (ca. 1960s). He left San Francisco for Anacortes, Washington, in 1977 to pursue his writing career. His articles on typography have appeared in Publish magazine.

Wesley B. Tanner began printing in high school in Los Angeles and moved to Berkeley in 1965. He published his first book, *Cancrim Oris*, in 1970. In 1971 he worked at Clifford Burke's press to print Jack Spicer's *A Red Wheelbarrow*. In 1972 he moved to 9th Street in Berkeley where he printed over eighty books and published nearly forty of them himself under his own imprint, Arif Press. Titles include *The Ideal Book* by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, *The Book of Benjamin* by Michael McClure, and *Four Quartets* by Lewis Thomas. Wesley printed the journal *Fine Print* for many years in partnership with Will H. Powers and taught a class in the hand-produced book at the Bancroft Library. He has a personal style developed from the aesthetic mix of Arts & Crafts philosophies and Daniel Updike's typography, definitely leaning towards a nineteenth-century Anglo-American aestheticism.

Don Grey established Two Windows Press in 1967, publishing over forty volumes of poetry and prose in the span of twenty years. In 1969 he collaborated with Clifford Burke on a volume of his own poems entitled *The Five Hours*. Throughout the 1970s in Berkeley he published poetry by Peter Wild, Howard McCord, and Mary Rexroth, to name a few. In 1983 he published *Devour the Fire*, the selected poems of Harry Crosby. Don's work closely followed the illustrated poetry chapbook style for which San Francisco has been the seed ground since the days of the Auerhahn Press and the influences of David Haselwood, Graham McIntosh, and Clifford Burke. This distinct style has been a strong motive force behind such diverse printers as Andrew Hoyem, the Five Trees Press, Robin Heyeck, and Gary Young. Don continued to work until 1987 when he closed his press and returned to full-time teaching.

The Five Trees Press was formed in 1972 by Clifford Burke's apprentices and friends Jaimie Robles, Cheryl Miller, Cameron Bunker, Eileen Calahan, and Kathy Walkup when they ponied up \$200 apiece and purchased a press. Their first book, *Crocus Sprouting* by Jane Rosenthal, was published in 1973. In 1974 they published Jaimie Robles's *Eva Awakening*, and in 1975 H.D.'s *The Poet & The Dancer*. *Modulations for a Solo Voice* by Denice Levertov in 1977 was their most notable book. In 1979 they published their tenth and last book, *Willies Throw*, a baseball/poetry book by Paul Metcalf.

In 1976 Cheryl and Kathy opened an all women's job shop, Pear Tree Printers, that lasted for several years. After they closed the job printing operation, Cheryl taught printing for a number of years at the San Francisco Urban School, a private high school, and in 1987 she and Will Powers married and moved to Minneapolis. Kathy Walkup left the printing business to found a graduate program in the book arts at Mills College, the first of its kind in the nation. Robles went to work years later at the Lapis Press in Los Angeles, and Cameron Bunker became a book conservator at the Uc Berkeley Library.

Poltroon Press, established in 1974 by Alastair Johnston and Francis Butler, published its first book, A Note Containing the Opinion of One Christopher Marly Concerning His Damnable Judgement of Religion and Scorn of God's Word by Richard Baines, in 1975. Poltroon publishes Francis Butler's illustrations, the typographic and bibliographic opinions and poetry of Alastair Johnson, and the writing of Butlers' and Johnston's favorite poets, Tom Raworth, Leslie Scalapino, Daryl Gray, Tom Clark, and Philip Whalen. The work of the press is iconoclastic and humorous with no clear line of descent but a mélange of McIntosh, Haselwood, and Zephyrus Image with some asymmetric principles thrown in. Poltroon is one of several presses (including

Rebis Press and Sombre Reptiles) that steer clear of the studious and the canonical. Irreverent and absurd though he may be, Alastair tends towards the Stauffacherian rational aesthetic when left to his own devices.

My own Black Stone Press, begun in Missoula, Montana, in 1974 and soon joined by Shelly Hoyt, moved to San Francisco in 1978. I started publishing a literary quarterly, Montana Gothic, then swiftly moved into letterpress printing and publishing poetry chapbooks, the first title being Born by Michael Poage. I supported myself and my family by commission printing first in Missoula, later in San Francisco, and then in Oakland. I was an autodidact for the first few years, but soon after I arrived in San Francisco had the good fortune to apprentice myself to Adrian Wilson. I subsequently studied early Venetian printing at the University of California, Berkeley, where for a time I was a doctoral student in the history of printing and publishing. Being too ornery to stay partnered to Shelley Hoyt I took off on my own to become Peter Koch, Printer. In 1987 I formed a limited partnership, Peter and the Wolf Editions, with Wolf von dem Bussche. We published Point Lobos, a portfolio consisting of fifteen poems by Robinson Jeffers and fifteen original photographic prints by Wolf, with an introduction by William Everson. [At the time of this talk I was] at work on a Greek/English edition of the fragments of Herakleitos translated by Guy Davenport, and an edition of Treatise on Nymphs, Sylphs, Salamanders and Divers Spiritual Creatures by Theophrastus Bombastus von Hoenheim, also known as Paraclesus. Shelley Hoyt went on to produce a suite of typographic prints and specializes in edition binding, utilizing nonadhesive techniques.

Rebis Press was founded by Jim Petrillo and Betsy Davids in 1972. Betsy began printing in 1970 with a copy of Ben Lieberman's *Printing as a Hobby* and a Nolan proof press at California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, where she was teaching English and creative writing. Rebis's first book, *Double Rising Eyelids Rolling Blue* (1972), consisted of ten poems by Betsy with four illustrations by Ed Moore. The press's sixth book, *The Softness on the Other Side of the Hole* (1976), a novella about male sexual fantasies by Kenneth Davids, is somewhat akin to an outhouse and a peepshow at the same time. The binding, designed by Jim Petrillo, consists of plywood, piano hinges, rivets, hair, and a hole. Rebis's ninth book, *Half Off* (1981), stories and images by Mimi Pond, has binding made from a shower cap, and what appears to be a shower curtain for end sheets. The press has issued a number of one-of-a-kind books (or book-like objects) and [at the time of this talk was] publishing *Dreaming Aloud Book Two*, dream writing by Betsy Davids, produced on a computer and laser printer. Rebis Press, consistently innovative and often humorous,

bears a certain family resemblance to California funk art and assemblage in its wilder productions. Betsy has taught book arts at CCAC [now CCA] for twenty years and has influenced a number of younger artists who have gone on to produce art and scholarship in the field.

Leigh McLellan's Meadow Press was established in 1974 in Iowa City, where she studied letterpress printing and bookbinding while she earned her MFA at the Writer's Workshop. Influenced primarily by Kim Merker, she moved to San Francisco in 1977. She has consistently devoted herself to the printing of poetry and her own illustrations, and the binding techniques she has learned along the way. A prolific loner, she has single-handedly produced over fifteen books and a considerable number of broadsides. She earns part of her living designing books for commercial design offices and has taught printing and binding at CCAC [now CCA] and Mills College. Her most successful book, *Hawaii One Summer* by Maxine Hong Kingston (1987), was illustrated by Deng Ming-Dao with four-color woodcuts. It was bound by Leigh herself in a unique split-board binding structure with exposed sewing over purple tapes designed by Betty Lou Chaika.

The Heyeck Press was founded in 1976 by Robin Heyeck and has, to date, published fourteen books of poetry and one treatise on marbling. All are original works and all are meticulously crafted. Robin designs and prints the books on her C&P Craftsman press and has them bound by professional bookbinders, often Hans Shuberth, the renowned San Francisco craftsman. Robin's first book was *Sunday in Another Country* by Francis Mayes (1977). Other authors included Honor Johnson, William Dicky, and Adrienne Rich. In 1983, *The Arts of Fire* by Francis Mayes appeared. The stunning title page was marbled at the press, and two years later Robin completed her one nonfiction publication, her own *Marbling at the Heyeck Press* (1985). Heyeck Press is located thirty miles south of San Francisco in the Heyeck family garage. Robin's work is consistently strong and restrained, and she is devoted to the reading, teaching, and publishing of poetry. She often publishes her books in two editions, a deluxe quarter leather binding on handmade paper, and an inexpensive paperback volume on better-grade machine-made papers.

Sombre Reptiles Press was formed by the painter Mary Ann Hayden and her husband, poet Jerry Ratch, in the fall of 1978. It printed its last book in spring 1984. In all, the press published sixteen titles, of which two were small offset chapbooks, three were offset editions with extensive letterpress embellishment in color, and the remaining titles were printed at the press using a Vandercook proofing press. Sombre Reptiles also printed a large selection of press ephemera and five editioned prints by Mary Ann. The press's first book,

Crabs by Stanley Bummer (Daryl Gray), was limited to twenty-six copies and was printed with the help of Alastair Johnston. In 1979 the press published Jerry Ratch's poetic text, Chaucer Marginalia, an unusual treatment printed offset with letterpress embellishment. In 1981, Kill Jim appeared, with text by Don Cushman (of West Coast Print Center fame) and unique collages by Mary Ann tipped into each of the sixty numbered copies. The earliest work of the press shows the influence of Poltroon Press but the best work was achieved later on and often reflects Mary Ann's paintings of that period.

THUS FAR I HAVE CONCENTRATED ON THE SMALL BAY AREA, San Francisco and the East Bay, but Santa Cruz, sixty miles south, at the top of Monterey Bay, has attracted printers, poets, and scholars for as many years as the University of California has had a campus on the hill above town. There, at UC Santa Cruz, Adrian Wilson and Ansel Adams teamed up to produce a photographic book seminar one summer in the mid-sixties, and William Everson was appointed to a chair and brought the Lime Kiln Press into existence during the 1970s. (There, as noted earlier, he printed his masterpiece, Granite and Cypress.) George Hitchcock, his Kayak magazine, and the Cowell College Press were also all connected with the school. Jack Stauffacher inaugurated the Cowell College Press as a model teaching press and was followed by Sherwood Grover (formerly pressman at the Grabhorn Press) and George Kane who, after retiring from the newspaper business took up antiquarian bookselling and the birch rod. These printers and teachers have created a Santa Cruz contingent of young printers of whom I will mention only a few.

Tom Killion, a native of Mill Valley, studied history at UC Santa Cruz and also apprenticed with both Stauffacher and Everson. In 1975 he produced his first book of linoleum-cut landscape prints and poetry entitled 28 Views of Mount Tamalpais, a reflection of the mountain that dominates Mill Valley and southern Marin County. In 1977 he published his second book, Fortress Marin, and established his own Quail Press. 1979 he published his monumental Coast of California, which, in 1988, was republished as a trade edition by David Godine. [As of the time of this talk he was] working on a travel book, Walls: A Journey Across Three Continents.

Gary Young, poet-printer and publisher, began his Greenhouse Review in Santa Cruz in 1975 and has produced sixteen books of poetry since 1976 under his imprint, the Greenhouse Review Press. In the late '70s he established a friendship with Gene Holtan and Elizabeth Sanchez, who had recently moved out of L.A. and started a press in their carriage house above

the Santa Cruz beach. Gene and Elizabeth influenced Gary enormously, and their book *Geography of Home*, a collaboration by all three, is the fruit of their artistic friendship. Gene's own book *Drawer Six*, as well as his masterful posters and postcards, amply show his illustrative powers. Gene is always experimenting and inventing letterpress techniques at his Green Gables press.

Felicia Rice began printing in 1977, studied with William Everson, Adrian Wilson, Jack Stauffacher, and Sherwood Grover, and taught classes with George Kane at the Cowell Press. She established her own imprint, Moving Parts Press, in 1977, and created the Mutant Drone Press in 1983 to produce limited editions "in response to Reaganomics." She operates a letterpress job shop and has devoted her publishing efforts to contemporary poets and writers. A politically active woman, she also produces posters and ephemeral items relating to issues environmental and aesthetic.

Peter and Donna Thomas are the proprietors of the Good Book Press in Santa Cruz, and Peter dates the beginning of his self-employment in the book arts to 1974. He established his press in 1976 and studied with William Everson and Sherwood Grover. Peter and Donna are papermakers as well as authors, printers, and binders, and they produce miniature books as well as elaborate *livres de luxe*. Of their forty-one published titles, the most notable is *The Poet Is Dead*, an elegy upon the death of Robinson Jeffers by William Everson, illustrated by Tom Killion. The paper, printing, and binding were all accomplished at the press — a hardcore Everson/Santa Cruz traditional book.

I should note in passing Richard Bigus, who studied with both Stauffacher and Everson and published primarily outside the region, wherever his academic career carried him. His *Ode to Typography* by Pablo Neruda was greeted (somewhat unfairly, in my opinion) with massive criticism by a few readers of *Fine Print* magazine.

MARIN COUNTY, TO THE NORTH OF THE CITY, HAS ITS SHARE OF printers, the most prominent of whom are Lewis and Dorothy Allen of the L+D Allen Press, closely followed by Arlen Philpot of the Tamal Land Press, Bruce Washbish of the Anchor and Acorn Press, and Carol Cunningham of the Sunflower Press.

Dianne Weiss, proprietor of the Figment Press, has been printing in Mill Valley since 1967. Her book *Composition in Black and White* reproduces pen and inks by her father, James Cady Ewell, from his 1919 show at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her miniature work is quite charming, especially her colorful carousel book.

Susan Acker has been at the Feathered Serpent Press since 1973. She continues the work of the press begun by Don Greame Kelley in 1951, printing primarily for other publishers, including the Book Club of California and the Yosemite Association. Her book *To Judge the Color of Grapes*, an essay by Crispin Elsted on Italians and art, is decorated with Susan's own etchings.

In nearly the same breath I shall mention the Berkeley printer Maryline Poole Adams and her Poole Press. Although not a Marin Printer, Poole Adams took workshops with Don Kelley and Susan Acker. Maryline began her press in the mid-70s after reading Virginia Woolf's Letters and Diaries and has designed, typeset, printed, illustrated, and hand-bound twenty-five miniatures, including a two-volume peep-show, Through the Looking Glass and Alice's Adventures Underground, and three pop-up/moveable books, The History of Printing, Pepy's Pop Up, and Punch and Judy.

IN 1975, STAUFFACHER'S *Phaedrus* AND EVERSON'S *Granite and Cypress* appeared as twin sentinels of the movement of fine printing away from the main stream of the publishing/printing industry. In fact, the list would hereafter become so esoteric and isolated that it would require a special publication to document and review the productions of the small fine press. During the 1970s printers moved more and more into the artist's arena, until 1989 when art departments [began] to recognize book arts as an academic subject. In 1975, *Fine Print*, published by Sandra Kirshenbaum, began to record the movements of the designer-printer-artists around the world. A new era had begun.

By 1989, fifteen years after Stauffacher's and Everson's major publications, there [were] over fifty presses active in the Bay Area. Seven colleges and universities offered classes in the book arts, and there were as many organizations and social clubs that centered their activities about the fine printing community.

PETER KOCH is proprietor of Peter Koch, Printers, as well as editor of the QN-L.

SANDOR BURSTEIN

(September 26, 1924 — November 21, 2015)

The Book Club notes with deep sadness the passing of Dr. Sandor Burstein. A Book Club member since 1985, Dr. Burstein was a devoted bibliophile, collector, and warm presence at our meetings. He is survived by his "beloved bride," Beth, his son, Mark, and daughter, Jan, along with two stepchildren, seven grandchildren, and two greatgrandchildren. Donations to the BCC in his name would be honored. A full obituary will appear in our next issue.

REVIEW

NICHOLAS OLSBERG, Architects and Artists: The Work of Ernest and Esther Born. San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 2015

WIM DE WIT

E VERY ONCE IN A WHILE, I pick up a book devoted to a subject with which I expect to be pretty familiar, but then, taking a look, realize that I know very little about the topic after all. This was my experience exactly when I saw the elegantly boxed book, Architects and Artists: The Work of Ernest and Esther Born, written by Nicholas Olsberg and recently published by the Book Club of California in San Francisco. I knew of Ernest Born's work as a teacher in what is now known as the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley; I was aware of some of the buildings he had designed in the 1930s and '40s in the San Francisco area; and I had seen the gigantic scholarly publication, The Plan of Saint Gall (1979), that he had produced with Berkeley medievalist Walter Horn. I was also an admirer of the captivating photographs that Esther Born had made during a trip to Mexico and published in 1937. Finally, I was very familiar with the powerful pictures she had taken of two Frank Lloyd Wright houses in Northern California, the Hanna House in Palo Alto (1938) and the Bazett House in Hillsborough (1940).

As soon as I opened the book, however, I realized that what I knew was only the tip of an iceberg. Extremely beautiful images (drawings by Ernest and photographs by Esther — sometimes showing the same building captured from the same angle by each of them, each working in his or her own medium) jump off the glossy pages of heavy paper stock. Both Borns come across as hugely creative artists who engage with the built environment and use it as the main subject for their artwork. The question that comes to mind is why isn't this duo as famous as other architectural renderers and photographers like Jules Guérin, Hugh Ferriss, Marion Mahoney Griffin, Julius Shulman, or Ezra Stoller? The quality of the Borns' work is just as high, yet there is not much to be found about them in the history books. It is therefore time for a re-appreciation of their work. So, let's start with some background information, as there may be many others who are not as familiar with the life and work of these two artists as they would wish to be. Architects and Artists, which deals with Ernest and Esther Born's lives and work in chronological order, is a good source for this fundamental information.

Ernest Born and Esther Baum Born were both born in Northern California, in San Francisco in 1898, and Palo Alto in 1902, respectively. From an early

age, Ernest showed great facility with pen and pencil, and as a college student at uc Berkeley, he studied civil engineering, architecture, and graphic arts. He met Esther, who had also studied architecture at Berkeley, in late 1924; they married in 1926. During and immediately after their courtship, Ernest and Esther traveled quite a bit, and, thanks to a number of exhibitions and publications, Ernest's travel sketches became well known in the architectural world. After the couple's return from extended honeymoon travels, they settled in New York, where they both worked as draftsmen in architectural offices. Ernest drew critical attention for his architectural renderings. Esther, in the meantime, bought a camera and taught herself to take photographs, especially of architecture. It was during this period that they traveled around the city and took stock of New York's buildings: skyscrapers, bridges, and structures in the harbor. Shadows visible on the buildings in the Borns' depictions show that they were studying the same sites at exactly the same time. (An alternate explanation would be that Ernest used Esther's photographs to finish the details of his drawings, but that is hard to imagine for someone who liked drawing as much as he did). While never hanging out her shingle as a professional photographer, Esther developed a substantial body of work, documenting not only New York's architecture, but also the city's dance and theater scenes. Additionally, through a friendship with the Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera (who were the Borns' neighbors in New York), Esther became interested in modern architecture in Mexico. She traveled there to document the creations of architects such as Juan O'Gorman and Luis Barragán, and published her photos in the beautiful but quite rare book, The New Architecture in Mexico (1937).

After a few years of employment with more established architectural offices, in 1932 Ernest opened his own studio. It was the middle of the Depression. Architectural commissions were hard to come by, so he focused on illustration. He was already known for his beautiful drawings, a reputation that would never fade (a few years after he went into business on his own *The Architectural Forum* described him as "the outstanding American architectural delineator." *Architects and Artists*, p. 128). He was hired to provide graphic designs for building material suppliers and, more importantly, to produce covers and layouts for the major architectural journals of the period. The famous city-skyline covers for *American Architect* in 1934 were created by Born, as were the more subdued, yet nevertheless striking (for their use of letterform and color), covers of the mid-1930s for *The Architectural Record* and *The Architectural Forum*.

By the mid-1930s, the Borns decided to move back to San Francisco, where Ernest took on "real" architectural work, not only in the context of the soon-to-be-built 1939 World's Fair of San Francisco, organized to celebrate the opening of the Bay Bridge (1936) and the Golden Gate Bridge (1937), but also to develop prototypes for low-cost row houses. Again, Ernest was immediately successful, winning awards and wide recognition for his designs. Esther photographed many of his projects.

During and after World War II, Ernest finally found clients who commissioned him to build houses. As he himself noted, his houses were "marked by 'simplicity in all things — planning, design, construction — all based on a simplification in our manner of living'" (Architects and Artists, p. 181). He thus made a contribution to the emerging Northern California modernist residential style. He also became increasingly interested in the urban issues facing San Francisco. While his plans to make the city more car friendly were basically ignored, he did become involved in plans for the Bay Area Regional Transportation system (BART) and built a few of its stations (1972-73).

Towards the end of his career, Born moved from design to scholarship. Together with his friend Walter Horn — for whom, in collaboration with the noted architect Serge Chermayeff, he had designed and built a house in Richmond, CA (1941-47) — Born did some typological studies. In his first project he focused on medieval barns and timbered halls throughout Europe. After that was completed, he embarked on fourteen years of research (1965-79) devoted to St. Gall, a medieval abbey in Switzerland. The graphic design of the marvelous three-volume publication that resulted from this study, *The Plan of St. Gall*, was by Born. He thus returned once more to the line of work that had sustained him so often when architectural design work had failed to materialize. Five years after the publication of this study, the Borns left Northern California for San Diego, where Esther died in 1987 and Ernest passed away in 1992.

In spite of the calm beauty of Ernest Born's built work, perfectly represented in Esther's photographs, it is not his buildings that stand out in the present book, but the high quality of his drawings. Ernest and Esther Born's daughter, Beatrice, told author Nicholas Olsberg that her mother had her feet on the ground so that her father could have his head in the clouds. Born may very well have been a dreamer, but throughout the book, he comes across as someone who thinks through the drawing and who is driven to communicate his thoughts visually. Throughout his work, the strength of the line, the intensity of the colors, the *mis-en-page* of the subject, all show us, on the one hand, that Born knew what he saw. On the other hand, they

show us that he investigated how these structures held up, or how the spaces related to each other, and that he explored the textures of the surfaces he saw. For her part, Esther, who stepped back from the most intense aspects of architectural design work when she had a daughter, managed Ernest's office, pursued interior design work, and documented her husband's work and that of other architects. Nicholas Olsberg's wonderful prose and the beautiful layout of the book (by Michiko Toki of Toki Design) do admirable justice to the quality of the work of both artists.

Taking all of this into consideration, one is compelled to return to the question I asked in the opening paragraphs of this review: How is it possible that this couple (one member of which, Ernest, was called "the grand old master of San Francisco" by Allen Temko in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1982) is not better known outside the Bay Area, or at least not beyond a limited number of design aficionados of a certain age?

As usual, there are probably many answers, but it must be acknowledged that the Borns are partly responsible themselves. When they closed their design office in San Francisco in 1971, they discarded most of the firm's archives, including, it seems, the architectural design drawings and construction drawings. When I read this in the chronology at the end of the book, I couldn't help thinking: if only Born had been able to hold onto his papers a few more years, as the 1970s was exactly the decade when architectural archives and museums were established all over the western world. Within a few years, it became accepted practice for those institutions to acquire not only an architect's beautiful renderings but also his or her working drawings. Berkeley, the school where Born had taught for many years, already had an architectural archive in the early 1970s and Born's archive could easily have gone there. Luckily, over the years this institute was able to bring together a representative group of archival materials documenting Ernest and Esther Born's work (other Born drawings are still in the estate of Ernest and Esther Born and a large number of Esther's photographs are in the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal, while the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles also holds a small group of papers). Nonetheless, if a more complete archive had been available to researchers, the Borns' oeuvre might have been the object of an historical study well before Olsberg made it the focus of his attention.

Another reason for the lack of a broad knowledge about the Borns is that graphic designers and, especially, illustrators are not as highly appreciated as visual artists or architects. Even today, there are few archival establishments that conserve graphic design materials. And the number of academic

institutions where one can study the history of graphic design and illustration is similarly small.

This harsh reality makes the publication of Architects and Artists: The Work of Ernest and Esther Born more than just a monograph of the work of a fascinating couple. Indeed, it is an important stepping-stone from which, I hope, many new studies will arise. The Book Club of California should therefore be thanked for bringing the work of Ernest and Esther Born to our attention, and for giving us readers so much visual pleasure.

WIM DE WIT is an architectural historian specialized in the history of twentieth-century architecture. He is the adjunct curator of architecture and design at the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University.

REVIEW

Suave Mechanicals: Essays on the History of Bookbinding Vol. I 2013, Vol. II, edited by Julia Miller, designed by Cathleen Baker. The Legacy Press, 2015 (www.thelegacypress.com).

DAVID BROCK

To Many of us who have been in the field of book and paper conservation for the last three to four decades, Cathleen Baker is legendary—as a paper conservator, an instructor, a scholar, and now as a book designer, printer, and publisher. In 1997, while completing an MFA in Book Arts at the University of Alabama, she established The Legacy Press. This awardwinning press publishes nicely designed, cleanly printed and bound books about printing, paper, and the bookbinding arts. It is worth special note that since 2009, "all The Legacy Press books have been printed and bound locally." On the website Baker writes, "while printing my thesis project, Endgrain Designs & Repetitions: The Pattern Papers of John DePol, on my Vandercook No. 4 in the summer of 2000, I often wondered what it would be like to publish books that did not take so much time at the press and that could be offered at much more affordable prices. Consequently, I decided that The Legacy Press would specialize in well designed, offset printed books." After finishing her PhD at UA she moved to her home state of Michigan, where she is currently conservation librarian and exhibit conservator for the University of Michigan Library.

Suave Mechanicals is edited by Julia Miller, herself a book conservator and author of Books Will Speak Plain: A Handbook for Identifying and Describing Historical Bindings, published by The Legacy Press in 2010. The well-researched

and capably written essays in *Suave Mechanicals*' two volumes range widely through the long history of bookbinding, and focus on techniques, materials, alterations, styles, tools, conservation/restoration, and more. The authors are practicing conservators, librarians, independent researchers, educators, and renegades. As the essays amply demonstrate, the appellation "historians" could also be appended to this list of professional titles.

Aside from the excellent research found in the essays, the strength of these two volumes lies, in part, in their historical reach. The reader moves from the fragmented evidence of early papyrus binding to nineteenth-century bindings of papier maché; from personal and sometimes anonymous inscriptions penned by owners in their books, to signed publishers' cloth-cased bindings. As Miller states in her introduction to volume I, "...the essays are eclectic... rich in sound, rich in tradition, rich in mystery, rich in eccentricity."

Reading through *Suave Mechanicals*, I marveled at how unique it is. This is not a survey of the history of bookbinding, nor is it a manual, and yet it has a foot in each camp. The essays do not move in an obvious, orderly fashion from subject to subject but are as diverse and surprising as the books and techniques they describe. This broad approach is addressed as follows by the editor: "A published series such as this one can play an important role in addressing the need for a print format forum to serve as one of the repositories for the exchange of research, the identification of new or neglected areas of research, and the encouragement of scholarly writing by practitioners in the field associated with the book arts."

I would like to provide a hint of what can be found between the covers of Suave Mechanicals. The essay "Finding Identity on the Endpapers: Folk Traditions of Writing and Drawing in Books" by independent researcher Rosa Scobey Moore gives examples of various ways readers have personalized their books. Using plenty of photographs as illustrations, Moore lists penmanship practice, ownership marks, and rhymes describing the punishments awaiting would-be book thieves as additions commonly found penned in books. There are also numerous photographs of lovely hand-drawn and hand-painted book plates. As Miller points out in her introduction, "Inscriptions and decorations in our books represent the long human thread of interaction with recorded knowledge, a thread that we know has been continuous since the first paintings were made on cave walls, and someone commented with a handprint." On a personal note, I recall the inscription I came across while reading a book from Stanford's library. Written boldly in ink, it practically shouted, "I love Jeremy Brown!" It's funny, I remember the inscription and the oily, dark blue ink it was written in, but I can't recall the book or its subject at all.

Another interesting essay, and one sure to appeal to many contemporary book artists, is "Protection against the Evil Eye: Votive Offerings on Armenian Manuscript Bindings" by Armenian scholar and librarian at the Morgan Library, Sylvie L. Merian. Merian writes, "During decades of research on Armenian bindings, I began to notice a number of...rather peculiar bindings. In addition to the expected crosses or crucifixes, these manuscripts, as well as some printed books of religious works, are decorated with an amazing variety of bizarre objects nailed onto the leather-covered wooden boards... Most of these objects are nailed onto the manuscripts' covers without any regard to design or pattern, and often they overlap each other, almost in layers." The reader goes on to learn not only what these "bizarre objects" are and the purposes they serve, but also about books kidnapped and held for ransom. If all of this isn't already compelling enough, there is a stunning photograph of a parchment manuscript shot by a bullet during the Hamidian massacres of 1895-1896.

An essay of particular interest to practicing book conservators will be Jeffrey S. Peachey's "Beating, Rolling, and Pressing: The Compression of Signatures in Bookbinding Prior to Sewing." While many book conservators are familiar with the illustrations of beating hammers and stones found in Diderot's Encyclopedie and "The Bookbinder," a 1588 print from a set of playing cards by Jost Amman, information in English on the "how" and "why" of beating books is extremely scarce and, when found at all, extremely limited in explanation. Peachey makes this observation, "The idea that skilled printers laboriously, by hand, set every piece of type on a book page from the mid-[fifteenth] century to the late [eighteenth] century does not seem foreign to most students of bibliography. But the fact that these same books — each one, individually — were beaten with a hammer on a stone, by hand, often many hundreds of times is a surprise to many." Peachey's article is not only full of engaging and useful information, but is also accompanied by excellent photographs of beating hammers, books beaten and unbeaten, and woodcuts and engravings from various historical periods showing binders at work with their tools. This essay fills a yawning gap in the written history of bookbinding technique available in English.

These are merely thumbnail sketches of three of the fifteen essays comprising the two volumes of *Suave Mechanicals*, but the reader is likely to find the remaining twelve essays equally various and interesting. Reading them, one is reminded that every book has its history, which can often be complex and layered. Learning to recognize and "read" this mute history, to treasure and preserve it, is one of the goals of The Legacy Press and its publications.

As Miller states about *Suave Mechanicals*, "These essays are presented to our colleagues to read, discuss, debate, and perhaps challenge, but most hopefully, they are offered to aid our colleagues in our work of identifying, describing, and preserving historical bindings."

In her book, *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With* (MIT Press, 2007), Sherry Turkle writes, "We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with." For many of us, these objects of love have been, and are, books. *Suave Mechanicals* is a wonderful manifestation and testimony of this love.

DAVID BROCK got his start in hand bookbinding through a night class taught by Gary Frost at the Art Institute of Chicago. This was followed by a six-year apprenticeship with William Anthony in hand bookbinding and conservation. He is currently a rare book conservator at Stanford University Library.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SIGHTINGS

CAROLEE CAMPBELL

N SEPTEMBER 9, 2015 in Rothenberg Hall, the Huntington Library's very agreeable new lecture and performance hall in San Marino, a lecture was given by best-selling author Andrea Wulf. The lecture was followed by a reception and book signing under the stars. Wulf had come to Southern California from the United Kingdom at the very start of what seemed, to this writer, to be a punishing two-month book tour that would take her crisscrossing the United States. Her inaugural talk was given on September 5 at the Library of Congress National Book Festival in Washington DC In retrospect, the rapt gathering here at the Huntington was fortunate. We were only the fourth audience, of twenty-six, that Wulf lectured about her newly published book, *The Invention of Nature*. Each one of her stops will be at a library, university, or museum. Hers is a full-on lecture with slides, not a book store appearance.

Andrea Wulf is an historian and writer who was born in India and moved to Germany as a child. She lives in Britain where she trained as a design historian at the Royal College of Art in London. She wrote Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation, which was published to great acclaim in spring 2011. Her book The Brother Gardeners won the American Horticultural Society 2010 Book Award and it resided for a time on the New York Times Best Sellers list. Scott Calhoun, a member of the Book Award Committee of the Horticultural Society writes, "Lest you fear the book is set in staid drawing rooms filled with rattling tea

cups and powdered wigs, the text is peppered with tales of English playboys on high seas, plant adventures, Tahitian orgies, and glimpses into Benjamin Franklin's passion for horticulture."

But back to the Huntington Library lecture. That evening, Wulf brought a fresh excitement to the description of her research on *The Invention of Nature*, painting her experiences with obvious delight. As well she might, because she has succeeded in not discovering but rediscovering the preeminent scientist-genius who, during his time (1769-1859), was spoken of by his contemporaries as only second in fame to Napoleon, in all of Europe. The man in question is one whose name has now receded into near oblivion but whose impact is such that there is not only a glacier named after him but also mountain ranges, rivers, waterfalls, parks, almost three hundred plants, more than one hundred animals, a fierce six-foot predatory squid, minerals, an area on the moon, and even an ocean current. More places on the planet are named after him than any other person. Although today he has been almost forgotten outside academia, at least in the English-speaking world, it is possible that by now you might have guessed it — Alexander von Humboldt.

To quote Andrea Wulf, "Humboldt's books, diaries and letters reveal a visionary, a thinker far ahead of his time. He invented isotherms — the lines of temperature and pressure that we see on today's weather maps — and he also discovered the magnetic equator. He came up with the idea of vegeta-

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tion and climate zones that snake across the globe. Most important, though, Humboldt revolutionized the way we see the natural world. He found connections everywhere. Nothing, not even the tiniest organism, was looked at on its own. 'In this great chain of causes and effects,' Humboldt said, 'no single fact can be considered in isolation.' With this insight, he invented the web of life, the concept of nature as we know it today."

How did he come to these conclusions? Born in 1769 into a wealthy Prussian aristocratic family, he turned his back on a life of privilege and set out to discover for himself "how the world works." As Andrea Wulf explains, "As a young man he set out on a five-year exploration to Latin America, risking his life many times and returning with a new sense of the world. It was a journey that shaped his life and thinking and that made him legendary across the globe. He lived in cities such a Paris and Berlin, but was equally at home on the most remote branches of the Orinoco River or in the Kazakh Steppe at Russia's Mongolian border. During much of his long life, he was the nexus of the scientific world, writing some 50,000 letters and receiving at least double that number. Knowledge, Humboldt believed, had to be shared, exchanged and made available to everybody."

He packed his life with travels and incessant work. He was fascinated by scientific instruments, measurements, and observations. He threw himself into physical exertion, pushing his body to its very limit.

He ventured deep into the rain forests of Venezuela and crawled along narrow rock ledges at precarious heights in the Andes to witness the flames inside an active volcano. As a sixty-year-old, he traveled more than 10,000 miles to the remotest corners of Russia, outpacing his younger companions.

But it was on June 23, 1802, near the summit of Chimborazo, an inactive volcano in Ecuador that rises to almost 21,000 feet, that Humboldt, then thirty-two years old, had his epiphany. He and his three companions were climbing alone. Their terrified porters had abandoned them at the snow line. The three left most of their baggage behind and were climbing only with scientific instruments, some of the best that existed in Europe at the time: a barometer, a thermometer, a sextant, and a "cyanometer," to measure the blueness of the sky. Humboldt fumbled with his instruments with numb fingers, measuring altitude, gravity, and humidity. He took meticulous notes, jotting down everything he encountered: butterflies, tiny flowers, lichen. At 18,000 feet there were no more signs of organic life. At one point they crawled on hands and knees along a high, narrow ridge that was no more than two inches wide. They continued to climb in dense fog, inching upward in an icy wind surrounded by dark, perpendicular walls covered with protruding

knife-blade-like rock. The jagged rocks had shredded their shoes and their feet were bleeding.

Suddenly, the fog lifted and they beheld the snowy summit of Chimborazo against the bluest of skies. Humboldt took measure of how high they had climbed; 19,413 feet. No one in the world had ever climbed that high before. And no one had ever breathed such thin air. Although they were barely 1,000 feet below the summit, they were stopped from summiting by a huge crevasse, impassable at 65 feet wide and 600 feet deep.

As he stood at the very top of the world, looking down on range upon mountain range undulating off into the distance beneath him, he began to see it differently for the first time. All his discoveries of nature began folding in together to form a single perfect concept. He was thunderstruck by the sudden realization that the earth was, in fact, one great living organism with everything connecting to everything else. Because he was gifted with an extraordinary memory, it allowed him to compare the observations he had made all over the globe for several decades, at points thousands of miles apart. Humboldt was able to "run through the chain of all phenomena in the world at the same time," one colleague later noted. On Chimborazo Humboldt had seen alpine plants like those he had collected in Switzerland and lichens that reminded him of lichens from the Arctic Circle and Lapland. No one had looked at plants like this before. He saw plants as types according to their location and climate. He created a new vision of nature, nature as a global force with corresponding climate zones across continents. This stupendous discovery is one that has determined the way we understand the natural world today.

I am reminded of another epiphany on the top of another mountain. This one, Mount Katahdin in Maine in September 1846. Henry David Thoreau had climbed to its summit, and he wrote about the experience in "Ktaadn," the first long piece he published while he was living at Walden. He was just turning thirty-one, nearly the same age as Alexander von Humboldt when he was on Chimborazo, when the first installment of "Ktaadn" appeared in the July 1848 issue of the *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*. At the end of the essay, Thoreau writes:

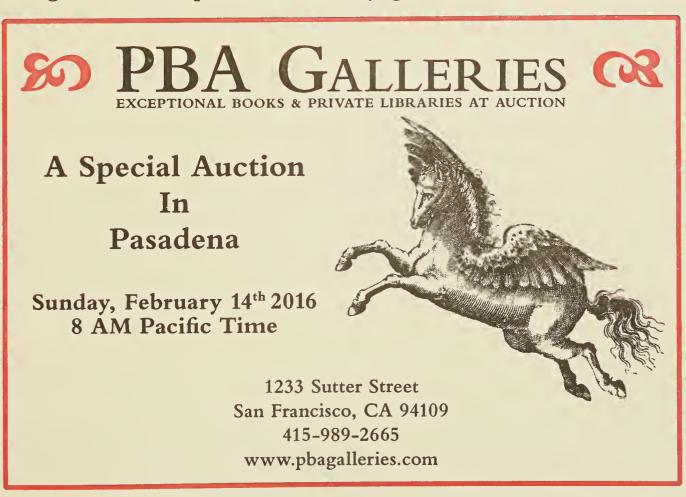
I stand in awe of my body, this matter to which I am bound has become so strange to me. I fear not spirits, ghosts, of which I am one — that my body might, — but I fear bodies, I tremble to meet them. What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries! — Think of our life in nature, — daily to to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, — rocks, trees, wind on our

cheeks! the solid earth! the actual world! the common sense! Contact! Contact! Who are we? where are we?

Where Humboldt's earth is being braided together in his mind as a single, elegant whole, as he stands utterly exhausted near the summit of Chimborazo, Thoreau's world at the summit of Katahdin is in chaos, flying apart. The experience so alarms him that he sounds uncharacteristically unbalanced and out of control. He calls into question the solidity of identity he found at Walden and even his Transcendental beliefs. That reaction would later become modified but that is another subject.

At the age of sixty-five, Humboldt began what would become his most influential book: Cosmos: A Sketch of the Physical Description of the Universe. The breadth and depth of Cosmos was incomparable to any publication to date. The world was electrified. The book was read by scientists, artists, politicians, and students alike. The first two volumes were so popular that within four years, three competing English editions had been published. Until this point, few Americans had read Humboldt's previous works. Cosmos changed all that. Ralph Waldo Emerson was one of the first to obtain a copy.

In The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World, Andrea Wulf quotes Charles Darwin's reference to Humboldt as the "greatest scientific traveler who ever lived." Humboldt's influence on Darwin was such that it was he who inspired Darwin's five-year journey around the world on board the Beagle in the first place. On that voyage Darwin carried Humboldt's



Personal Narrative of Travels, reading it until it was dog-eared. Humboldt's belief that humans all around the world belong to the same species had an important influence on Darwin's own views regarding natural selection and human evolution in general. It is notable that Darwin cited Humboldt more than four hundred times in his own writings.

So, too, did Humboldt's name appear in the journals and notebooks of Henry David Thoreau as well as in his published work. What Humboldt had observed across the globe, Thoreau did at home. Humboldt's *Cosmos* was about the relationship between humankind and nature, and Thoreau placed himself firmly into this cosmos. At Walden Pond he wrote, "I have a little world all to myself. Why should I feel lonely? Is not our planet in the Milky Way?"

John Muir was twenty-nine years old in 1867, eight years after Humboldt's death, when he packed a few belongings in order to travel lightly and set out on foot from Indianapolis to make his way to South America. He took a couple of books, soap, a towel, a plant press, pencils, and a notebook. He had only the clothes he wore. Muir wrote in a letter, "How intensely I desire to be a Humboldt, to see the snow-capped Andes and the flowers of the Equator." In Florida he was struck down with malaria. After recuperating, he boarded a ship bound for Cuba. While sailing, he had bouts of weakness and fever. On Cuba he was still too ill to explore the island as Humboldt had done for many long months. He finally abandoned his plans for reaching South America and traveled to California hoping the milder climate would restore his health.

In 1868 Muir walked out of the city of San Francisco and into the mountains, finally entering Yosemite Valley. When in Yosemite, Muir was viewing nature with Humboldt's eyes, seeing not only the majestic views but counting "165,913 flowers blooming in one square yard." Muir marked passages in his copy of Humboldt's *Views of Nature* and *Cosmos* where Humboldt writes of the "harmonious co-operation of forces" and the "unity of all the vital forces of nature," as well as Humboldt's famous remark that "nature is indeed a reflex of the whole." In *My First Summer in the Sierra*, Muir went on to write the following: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

Darwin, Thoreau, and Muir are but three of the many towering figures whose ways of understanding nature were irrevocably altered by Humboldt. In *The Invention of Nature*, Andrea Wulf writes compellingly about many more of those figures in rich detail, including Humboldt's traveling companion while in South America, a young French botanist, Aimé Bonpland, whom

Humboldt first met in Paris. (Did I mention that Humboldt and Bonpland paddled 1,400 miles down the Orinoco River in 1870, discovering the Brazil nut, among other things, along the way?)

And now, back to Andrea Wulf — herself no weak petunia. During her lecture she showed slides of her research as she traveled the world, following in Humboldt's footsteps. She saw the ruin of the anatomy tower in Jena, Germany, where Humboldt spent many weeks dissecting animals. At 12,000 feet on the Antisana, a volcano in Ecuador, with four condors circling overhead and surrounded by a herd of wild horses, she found the dilapidated hut where Humboldt had spent the night in March 1802. In Quito, she held Humboldt's original Spanish passport — the very papers that had allowed him to travel through Latin America. She found herself lying at night in a Venezuelan rain forest listening to "the strange, bellowing cry of howler monkeys."

Wulf journeyed to research archives in California, Berlin, and Cambridge, among others. She read through thousands of letters and said she finally understood how Humboldt's mind worked when she opened the boxes that contained his notes — "marvelous collages of thousands of bits of paper, sketches, and numbers." She traveled to see the archives at the New York Public Library, only to become stuck in Manhattan without electricity in October 2012 during Hurricane Sandy. She walked around Walden Pond

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and hiked in Yosemite. But her most exciting moment was when she finally climbed Chimborazo. "The air was so thin, every step felt like an eternity — a slow pull upward while my legs felt leaden and somehow disconnected from the rest of my body."

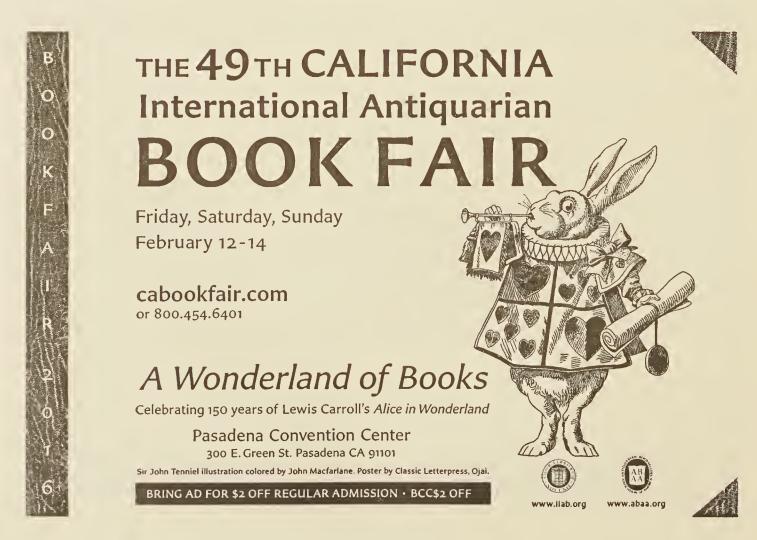
The evening with Andrea Wulf at the Huntington was as charming as Wulf herself. Her book, however, is engrossingly magnificent. Don't miss it.

CAROLEE CAMPBELL is the proprietor of Ninja Press, which is now in its thirty-second year, in Sherman Oaks, California. She is also an Emmy-Award-winning actor..

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

HENRY SNYDER

The Big news to report is the addition of a professional librarian to the Book Club staff, thanks to the initiative of Executive Director Jennifer Sime. The best part of this new position is that it is being filled by long-time Bcc library volunteer Katherine "Kitty" Luce (whose full bio is in the Fall 2015 issue of the *Quarterly News-Letter*). Kitty's priority at the moment is to create a shelf list and then perform a long-overdue shelf check, for which she will need some volunteers. Any takers? She has also taken on the responsibility of completing the transfer of the Book Club's online



catalog to OCLC (the Online Computer Library Center), and working with OCLC to make the record of our holdings accessible to all OCLC users. Until now, when libraries joined OCLC they had to maintain their own in-house online catalogs, thus maintaining two separate cataloging systems. When a searcher found an item at a specific library and wanted to access local holdings information, OCLC linked the searcher to the in-house catalog. OCLC has now instituted a new cataloging utility, WorldShare, which is designed to include all local holdings data for each library — thus obviating the need to maintain an in-house catalog. The implementation of the new system is not complete. We discovered that much of our holdings data other than the shelf mark is not accessible to the public. We are working with OCLC to complete the implementation so that all of our holdings data will be visible.

In the meantime, volunteer Iris Mangio-Simbulan has finished organizing the exhibition announcement postcards issued over the years by the BCC. They have all been mounted in sequence in photo albums, for both protection and easy reference. Iris has also digitized and brought up to date lists, started years ago by Duncan Olmsted and published in the QN-L, of all exhibition announcements. The BCC has published approximately 600 postcards over the years. We seem to be missing about fifteen. We will publish a list of missing cards in a subsequent QN-L and hope some of our members can help us fill in the gaps. This is a first step in the long overdue organization of the printed ephemera published by the BCC over a hundred years. Our two doughty volunteers Mark Knudsen and Norman McKnight have now embarked on the task of organizing the rest of the ephemera, having completed the monumental feat of organizing and recording the Roxburghe Club archive. Mark will also prepare a digital list of the ephemera, which will then be posted on the Book Club library's webpage, using Iris's list of exhibition announcements as a foundation.

Through the good offices of Norman McKnight, the Book Club was introduced to two exciting young printers, David Joseph Johnston and Mark Sarigianis, working under the aegis of the Prototype Press, Oakland. The library was fortunate in being able to acquire several of their first publications. Sadly, David died suddenly on October 3rd while playing frisbee with friends in Berkeley's Cragmont Park. He was not yet thirty. Dave was a journeyman typecaster and printer, and completed an apprenticeship at Arion Press/M&H Type. He started Sharp Teeth Press in his garage in the Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco in 2011. Dave then co-founded the Prototype Press, based at American Steel Studios in Oakland. The Prototype Press released a new publication, *The Glamour Requirement*, only a week before David died. This

was a project David cared passionately about. In April 2014, the Buffalo Bills were sued by their cheerleading squad, the Buffalo Jills, for several labor law violations, including failure to provide minimum wage. In the ensuing law suit, a document titled "Buffalo Jills Glamour Etiquette Hygiene Rules" became public and was published online. *The Glamour Requirement* includes a reproduction of the appalling and insulting document, with an editorial by Stefanie Kalem and illustrations by Whitney Coffin Shaw. It is published in a limited edition of thirty and sells for \$950. The library would like to acquire a copy in David's memory, and has reserved one, but will need to raise the money to purchase it. If you would like to make a contribution towards the acquisition, please send your check, payable to the Book Club of California, with a note that it is for this purchase. (The Book Club of California is a 501(c) (3) and all donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.) We are indebted to Norman McKnight for the above information.

ADDITIONAL NEWS

JEAN GILLINGWATORS

Retired Special Collections and archives librarian Tony Gardner has made bibliophilic news by donating a generous endowment gift to the Oviatt Library at California State University, Northridge. Not one to spend his retirement relaxing, Gardner recently returned from two years in Egypt where his wife Nancy Gallagher, a retired University of California professor, directed the uc Education Abroad Program for the Middle East. Tony worked in the conservation lab in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library on the campus of the American University in Cairo. Gardner, a graduate of CSUN with a BA in history, an MLS from ucla, and an MA in Middle Eastern history from the University of Arizona, established the endowment to purchase library materials printed on hand-operated presses with fine or hand bindings. Writing about the Gardner endowment for the CSUN Oviatt Library Newsletter, Jim Lunsford says, "...the endowment will allow CSUN students and researchers a unique opportunity to engage with and learn from a variety of rare materials and manuscripts."

JEAN GILLINGWATORS, proprietor of Blackbird Press in Upland, California, produces limited-edition, letterpress-printed books, broadsides, and ephemera, often with linoleum-block illustrations.

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NOTE: It is not necessary to have a sponsor for membership, but when new members join, we ask if a BCC member encouraged them to do so, so that we may thank and acknowledge that member in the *QN-L*.



AVAILABLE FROM THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

- The Woods Were Never Quiet: Stories

 By Monique Wentzel, with drawings by Jessica Dunne.

 Letterpress printed by Artichoke Press. (2014)
- Featuring the work of KAY RYAN, GARY YOUNG, MARTHA RONK, JOSEPH STROUD, and MICHAEL HANNON. Designed by CAROLEE CAMPBELL of NINJA PRESS, printed by CLASSIC LETTERPRESS, bound by PETTINGELL BINDERY. (2014) (Note: a limited number of unbound copies are available.)
- Architects and Artists: The Work of Ernest and Esther Born
 By Nicholas Olsberg. Designed by Michiko Toki. (2015)
- The California Tradition in Type Design, BCC Keepsake
 Designed by ROBERT BRINGHURST and printed by PETER
 RUTLEDGE KOCH. (2015)
- By Robert Bringhurst. With over one hundred full-color illustrations. Letterpress section handset and printed in two colors by Jerry Kelly. (Forthcoming 2016)

Founded in 1912, THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the book arts, preserving the California fine press tradition, and publishing significant contributions to the history of the book, with a focus on California and the West.

Open to the public. Please visit our library and exhibition space at 312 Sutter Street, Suite 500, San Francisco. For more information call 415-781-7532 or visit www.bccbooks.org